

# Mapline

*A quarterly newsletter published by  
The Hermon Dunlap Smith Center for the History of Cartography  
at The Newberry Library*

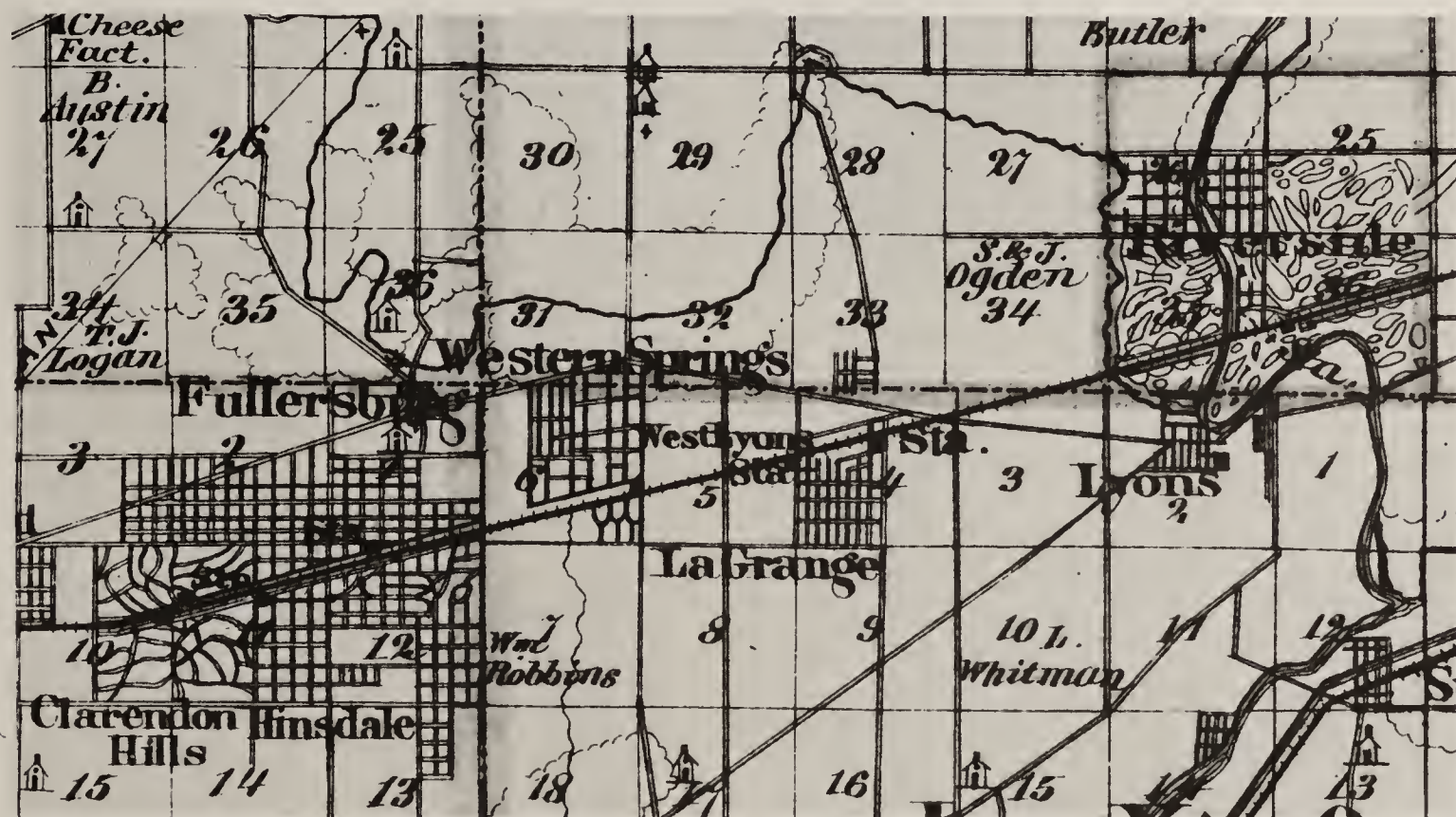
Number 41 March 1986

Dalia Varanka, Editor

## The Influence of Frederick Law Olmsted and his followers on Some Chicago Suburban Plans

When Frederick Law Olmsted (1822–1903) came to Chicago in 1868, the Chicago, Burlington and Quincy (C.B. & Q.) commuter railroad line had been completed for almost four years and was operating on a regular schedule. As a direct result of the construction of the railroad, prominent designers and developers were drawn to the area to transform the prairie and farmland into quality residential communities. These nineteenth-cen-

tury towns along the C.B. & Q. commuter line embody the image of the quintessential Midwestern Suburb (fig. 1). Their roots lie in the Illinois landscape which was later transformed by the first pioneer settlements, and their development was promoted by the coming of the railroad. But their success as an aesthetic form of town planning can be attributed to those who influenced their design.



1

Detail, showing part of the Chicago, Burlington and Quincy railroad route, from *Atlas of Illinois* (Chicago, 1876).

*The Hermon Dunlap Smith Center for the History of Cartography*

Director: David Buisseret

The Center was founded in 1972 at The Newberry Library to promote the study of the history of cartography through research projects, fellowships, courses of instruction, and publications. Further information is available on request.

*Mapline* is published four times a year in March, June, September, and December. Annual Subscription: \$6.00. Back issues (as available) \$1.50 each. Please address all correspondence to the editor at The Newberry Library, 60 West Walton Street, Chicago, IL 60610. ISSN 0196-0881





2

'Town of Riverside and Part of Lyons' by R.W. Dotson (Chicago, 1886).

One of the speculators who began developing the land along the C.B. & Q.'s forty-mile route was Emery Childs. After selecting and purchasing some of the large landholdings at Riverside, he and a group of Eastern businessmen formed the Riverside Improvement Company with the intention of developing this land as "a suburb accessible to the city, a place affording home sites where the families of businessmen could enjoy the freedom and attractive characteristics of country life" (Herbert J. Bassman, ed. *Riverside Then and Now*, 1936.) To design this community in accordance with their goals, the Company hired Frederick Law Olmsted, the most eminent landscape architect of the day. With his partner, the English architect Calvert Vaux (1824-95), Olmsted later transformed the flat prairie, relieved only by the elm, oak and hickory trees along the Des Plaines River, into a suburb described as a "village in a park".

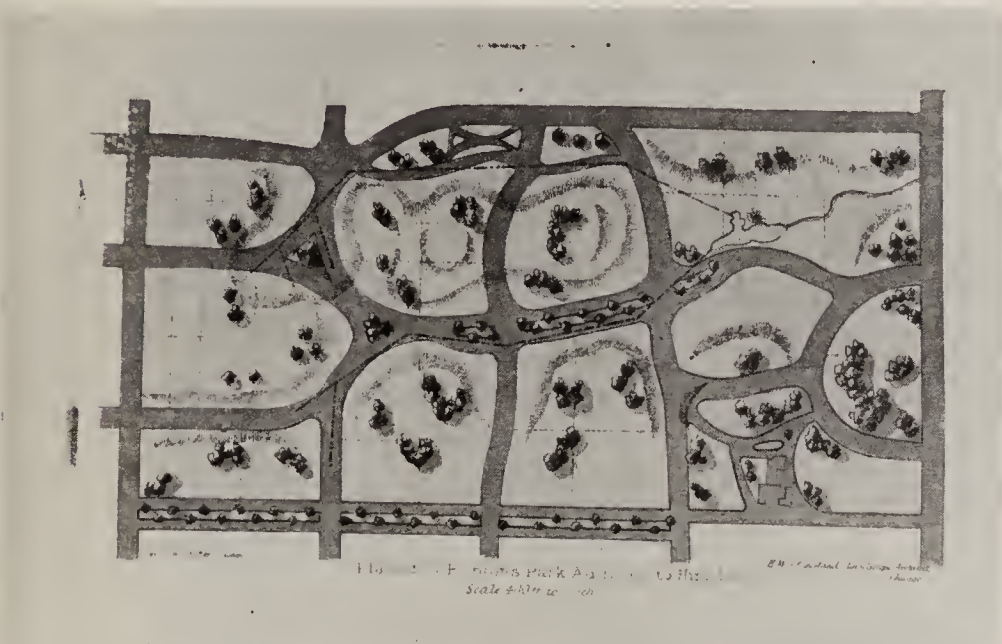
Before Riverside, the usual method of laying out suburban towns consisted of subdividing a certain section of property, bought by the acre and then sold by the front foot. Generally following the grid plan, these towns often ignored natural features such as hills and rivers. Seldom was there an overall plan for drainage or landscaping the area. The Riverside Improvement Company, however, sought a more permanent investment in a carefully planned community (fig. 2).

The curves of the river inspired Olmsted to design Riverside with "gracefully curved lines, generous spaces and the absence of sharp corners, the idea being to suggest and imply leisure, contemplativeness and happy tranquillity." (Olmsted, Vaux and Company. *Preliminary Report Upon the Proposed Suburban Village at Riverside, Near Chicago*, 1868.) This "idea"—the quintessence of the nineteenth-century suburb—was carried out and can be seen throughout his plan for Riverside.





3  
'General Plan of Riverside' by Olmsted, Vaux & Co. (Chicago, 1869).



4  
Plan of W. Robbins Park Addition to Hinsdale; from H. W. S. Cleveland's, *A Few Hints on Landscape Gardening in the West* (Chicago, 1871). Photograph courtesy of The Art Institute of Chicago

Olmsted believed that a successful landscape should be one which would conceal evidence of manmade environment. So strong was Olmsted's belief that certain factors could destroy a composition that he even threatened to terminate his work at Riverside when Emery Childs suggested building a house on Long Common Road, the nucleus of Riverside. He urged the Riverside Improvement Company to enact restrictive covenants to ensure that people would not destroy views by constructing more than thirty feet beyond the front building line to maintain a coherent image at Riverside. Olmsted depressed the streets below grade level to give the illusion of a continuous park with unobstructed view.

In the original plan for Riverside, Olmsted reserved seven hundred acres for open space, giving the suburb more park area per capita than any other American community (fig. 3). He treated these park spaces in a most aesthetic way. Parterres with clusters of shrubbery, shaded trees and flower beds lined the main avenues. The intersections of these roadways formed additional rounded park area which were to be enjoyed by all.

Olmsted went on to design other suburban communities in New York (Tarrytown), Maryland (Roland Park) and North Carolina (Pinehurst). Before he left the Chicago area, however, his influence was felt by others who, when planning their new communities along the Chicago, Burlington and Quincy commuter railroad line incorporated many of Olmsted's design principles as well as ideas on suburban planning.

Horace William Shaler Cleveland (1814–1900) and his partners William Merchant Richardson French (1832–1914), a civil engineer, and Samuel Sewall Greeley (1824–1916), a land surveyor, represented the most important group of Olmsted followers to appear in Chicago during this period. In fact, their designs for cemeteries, private estates, suburbs and suburban additions around Chicago could almost be mistaken for the work of Olmsted. In the Chicago, Burlington and Quincy suburbs, Cleveland and French designed Robbins Park in Hinsdale (1871) and probably were responsible for Clarendon Hills (1869–1870) as well. Although there is no documentary evidence proving the hand of Cleveland, Greeley or French in the latter community, Cleveland's work and writings strongly indicate that he, with the assistance of one of his partners, was involved in the design.

Like Olmsted, Cleveland adapted his plans to harmonize with the character of the landscape. He believed that a plan that took advantage of natural features was of primary importance while buildings served only to enhance the design. The boulevard, as proposed by Cleveland, represented one of the landscape architect's first attempts at improving the mechanical formalism of the standard gridiron – a system he vehemently opposed.

Cleveland designed the Robbins Park addition in Hinsdale (fig. 4) to follow the natural contours of the "oval elevations and graduating valleys... threading their way along them in scroll-shaped curves, the better to heighten their scenic effect..." (Timothy Bakken, *Hinsdale*, 1976), and provided for graveled walks, hedges, and trees.

In 1869, a brochure on Chicago's suburbs entitled *Out of Town* was published stating that Oliver J. Stough, Henry C. Middaugh, Amos T. Hall, James M. Walker and Robert Harris were laying out a town adjoining Hinsdale "in graceful park form, the design being of the latest, the best approved and handsomest landscape architecture, on which inducements will be offered to city men unsurpassed by any suburb of Chicago." (The Western News Company, *Out of Town, Being a Descriptive Historical and Statistical Account of the Suburban Towns and Residence of Chicago*, 1869). This area was originally called West Hinsdale (platted 1870) but was later changed to Clarendon Hills (platted 1873), a name more suitable for its location.

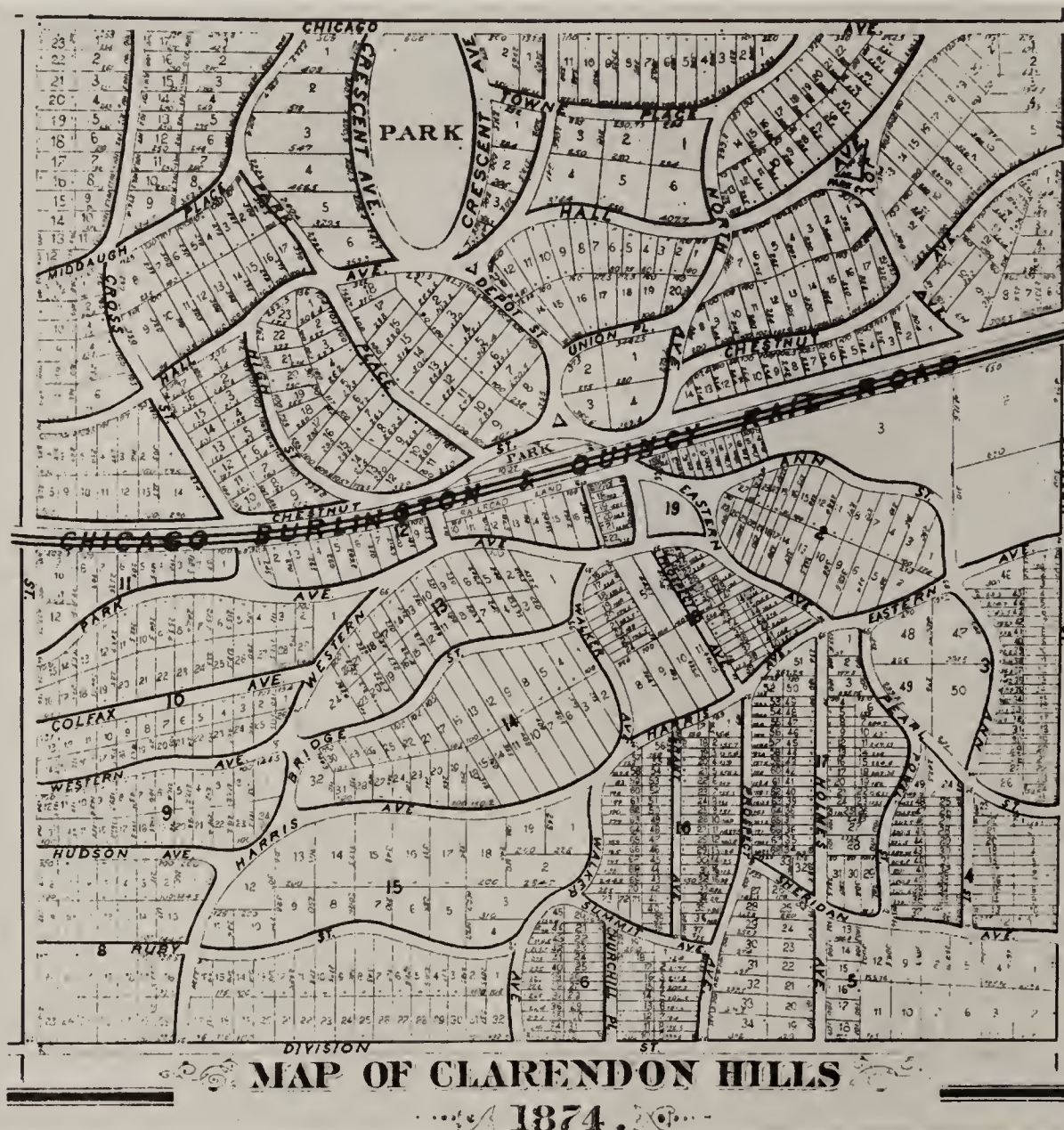


There are no records or documentary evidence stating who designed Clarendon Hills, although its plan clearly reflects Olmsted's and Cleveland's influence (fig. 5). The streets were well graded and followed the ridges of the moraine in much the same way as they did at Robbins Park. As at Riverside, several small parks and one large park, Crescent Way, were planned for public use. Lots were laid out in different sizes and shapes—a unique concept in suburban planning also characteristic of both Robbins Park and Riverside. Lawns sloped “gracefully to the streets” as Cleveland advocated.

Unfortunately, the initial boom growth of Clarendon Hills was short lived and, by 1922, only 32 houses had been constructed. For fifty years, the town just lay there contrary to all predictions. Perhaps the Depression which followed it prevented further development. Tradition has it that promoters went broke—just as the Riverside Improvement Company did.

However, the village was incorporated in 1924 and most of the southern portion of the original plan remained unscathed. The Crescent Way Park was never laid out as planned, but a more rectangular open space, Prospect Park, replaced it. The area between Harris and Ruby Streets, which was originally platted into streets was converted into Hudson Park. The small park near the railroad station was also not laid out as planned because the depot was moved to the southern side of the tracks. The town's commercial district eventually developed near Eastern Avenue. Today, enough of the original plan remains to give one the sense of the nineteenth-century landscape architects' underlying principle: beauty is attained by working with nature instead of against it.

Melanie A. Betz, Architectural Historian, is on the staff of the State Historical Preservation Center, Department of Education and Cultural Affairs, of South Dakota.





## *Historic Illinois From the Air:* An Account of the History of Illinois, Using Aerial Photographs.

For some time now, the Center has been collecting material for a work to be called *Historic Illinois from the air*. It will consist essentially of an account of the state's history, as illustrated by aerial photographs. These will vary widely in type, beginning with LANDSAT images and coming down in scale of coverage to low-level oblique shots.

There are two main themes to be illustrated: firstly, that the state developed in the first instance from the southwest, a process which can be strikingly illustrated by analyzing the existing transportation and landholding patterns of that region, in conjunction with early maps. The

second main theme is that, contrary to what many people think, the suburbs of Chicago retain much evidence of the early establishment and expansion of the city.

The plate below shows the Chicago, Burlington and Quincy roundhouse and locomotive shop at Aurora, in Kane County. Dating from the middle decades of the 19th century, this complex of buildings, best appreciated from the air, was the hub of operations for one of Chicago's most important early railroads. (See also the article on Olmsted.)



Smith Center photograph





Early sixteenth-century woodblock from the Herzog August Bibliothek, Wolfenbüttel

## NEW PROGRAM AT THE CENTER

During June, the Center will administer TRANSATLANTIC ENCOUNTERS: A COMPREHENSIVE INSTITUTE PROGRAM FOR THE COLUMBIAN QUINCENTENNIAL. This Summer Institute, funded in part by the National Endowment for the Humanities, is designed to provide an intensive four-week exposure to recent scholarship and interdisciplinary methods for the study of the Euro-American encounter of early modern times.

Europe on the Eve of Expansion, America and the World in 1400, Processes of Transatlantic Transfer, and the European Fashioning of the Other are topics which will be discussed by scholars Henry Kamen, Stephen Greenblatt, Frederick Hoxie, Raymond Fogelson, David Buisseret, Carla Rahn Phillips, S. Clark Hulse, Michael Palencia-Roth, Helen Tanner, and John Jentz.

Fellowships will also be offered by the Library for the academic year 1986-87 for scholars working on topics related to the transatlantic exchange of ideas, products, and peoples in the period 1450-1650.

For further information contact:

TRANSATLANTIC ENCOUNTERS PROGRAM  
The Newberry Library  
60 West Walton  
Chicago, Illinois 60610

## NEWBERRY ACQUISITIONS

James Robertson's map of Jamaica, published in 1804, provides us with a full and detailed image of the island at the height of its sugar- and slave-borne prosperity. Virtually every plantation is shown, with a conventional symbol to show what it is producing: sugar, indigo or coffee. Often, too, the symbol will tell us what kind of mill is to be found — using wind, water- or mule-power. This type of information is priceless to the economic historian, and other information may be valuable in genealogical studies; each lesser estate, for instance, is identified by the name of its owner. Finally, the towns and military installations are not neglected, as may be seen from the detail shown below.

Note the town of Kingston, in this photograph, laid out on a grid pattern which still survives today, and the complex barrier of reefs and cays which made its harbor difficult to enter. Note also the road-patterns, most of them established according to topography and the hazards of earliest occupation, but some of them laid out in straight lines by reforming governors. This is a map of great interest not only to historians, but also to archaeologists; it was purchased with funds from the Library's Andrew McNally Cartographic Fund.







# Map Talk

by T.E. Lawrence

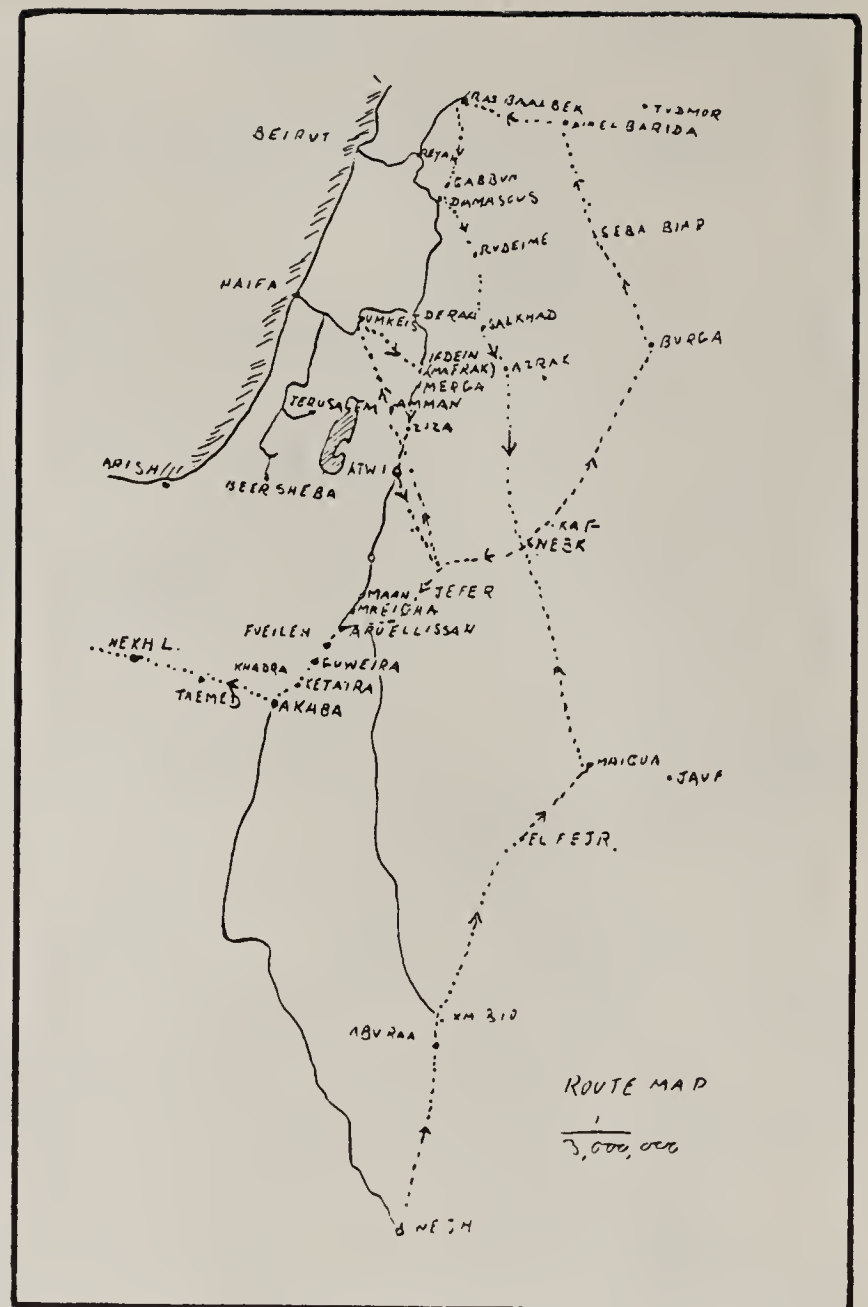
75: TO A FRIEND

*Sunday [Autumn 1914, Cairo]*

Today has been an awful scramble, for some unit (report says K's. private sec.) asked for a complete map of Sinai, showing all roads and wells, with capacity of latter, and a rough outline of hills. As Sinai is in manuscript in 68 sheets it meant a little trouble, for the sheets (because the surveyors were not like yourself) were not numbered or labelled, and so nobody could put them together. I came up like St. George in shining armour and delivered them (i.e. Col. Hedley said 'You go down and see what you can do with the damned thing') and by night behold there was a map of Sinai eighteen feet each way in three colours. Some of it was accurate, and the rest I invented. It took the three of us just eleven hours to get the thing traced.

It was proclaimed very good, and the request was made for an extension fifty miles to the E: that is Newcombe's part.

*The Letters of T.E. Lawrence, David Garnett, ed., 1938.*



Reproduced from Lawrence's own drawing

## Briefly Noted

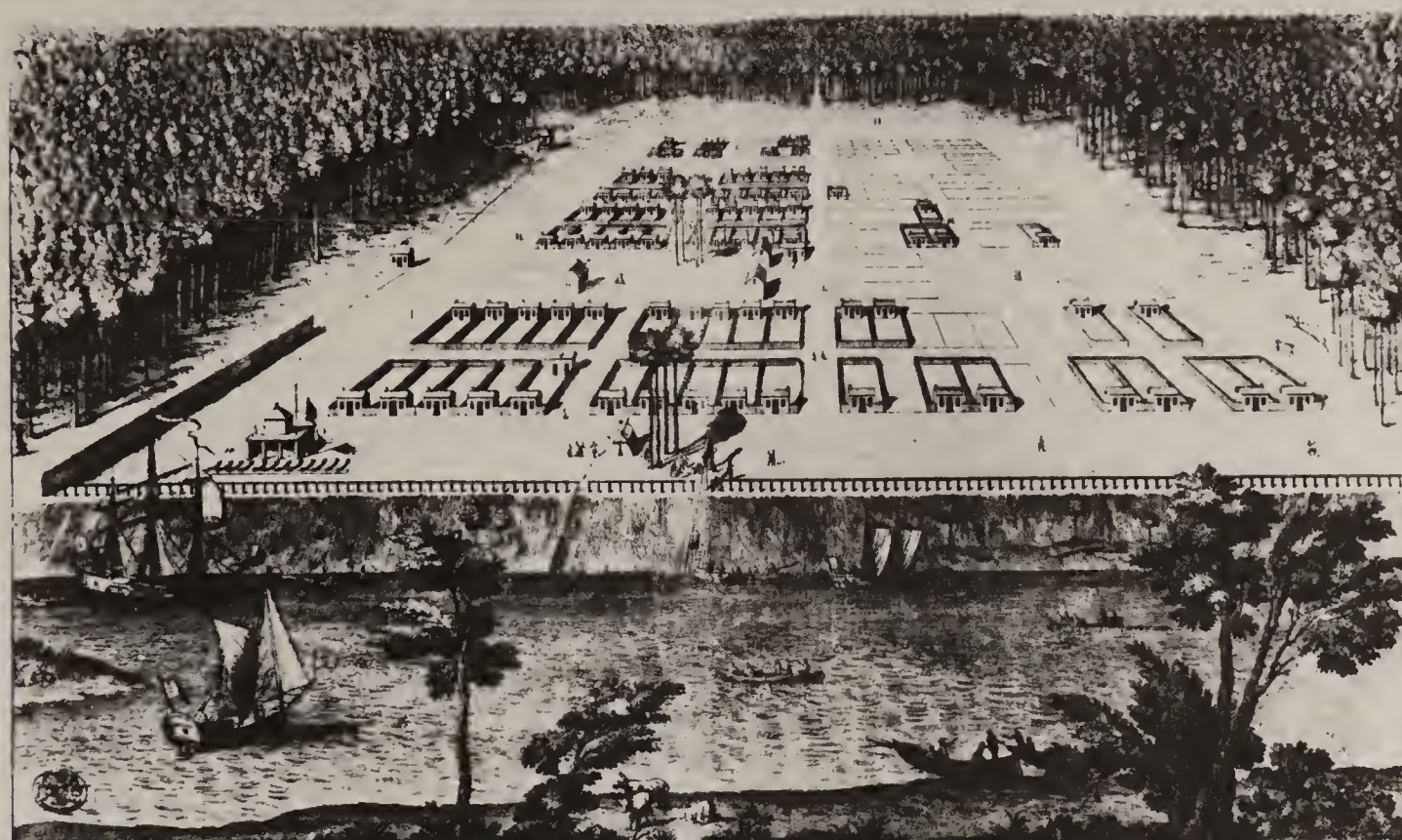
Welsh language explanatory leaflets describing legend information are to be issued with Welsh Ordnance Survey mapping. There are also plans on the next revision of OS Landranger series sheets to add alternative Welsh sheet titles and Welsh equivalents to upper case town names. Such recognition of the nature of regional inhabitants not only makes maps easier for local use, but can establish maps as documents for geo-linguistic studies.

The Museum of London has acquired the oldest known plan, an engraved copper-plate, of part of the city of London. Its authorship or commissioner is unknown, but some details on the map suggest it is based on information obtained during the period 1553-59. The influence of mixed Flemish, English, and Italian spellings in the place and feature names is reminiscent of the work of other contemporary mapmakers. The plan was first brought to light in 1955, but there is no known printed copy of the complete plan or of the two surviving plates.



Planning for the 1986 Australian Map Circle Conference in Adelaide, South Australia, is well advanced. The dates are Tuesday, 20 to Thursday, 22 May 1986 inclusive, and the location will be at the University of Adelaide, North Terrace, Adelaide. Topics of interest are in the broad field of historic, regional, and resource mapping and interpretation from pre-European concepts to the present, with emphasis on South Australia. For further information, please contact the Convenor, Max Foale, at: Dept. of Geography, The University of Adelaide, Box 498, G.P.O. Adelaide, S.A. 5001.





*To the Hon.<sup>ble</sup> the Trustees for establishing the Colony of Georgia in America  
This View of the Town of Savannah is humbly dedicated by their Honours  
Obliged and most Obedient Servant,  
Peter Gordon*

'A View of Savannah,' by Peter Gordon, 1734.

## A MEETING IN GEORGIA

Plans are underway for the 1986 Eastern Historical Geography Association meeting. It is scheduled for Friday, October 24, through Sunday October 26, at the DeSoto Hilton in downtown Savannah, Georgia.

Originally laid out in 1733 by colonizer James Oglethorpe, Savannah still reflects that initial imprint through its historic port district and remarkable series of parks and squares. This setting for the conference suggested to the organizers a number of themes for papers. Submissions relating to the following topics are especially encouraged:

- The 18th-century New World city
- The historical Development of the South
- Conservation of Historical Landscapes
- Evolving Settlement systems in early America

Please forward your abstracts for papers on these and other topics to the conference organizers. Additional information about the conference is available from: Louis De Vorsey or William Wyckoff, Department of Geography, University of Georgia, Athens, Georgia 30602. (404) 542-2856.

## International Cartographic Association

The next meeting of the Standing Commission on the History of Cartography of the ICA will be held at Prague, 21-24 September 1986. The following year, the Commission will meet in Paris, on the occasion of the 12th International Conference on the History of Cartography (7-13 September 1987), and then at Morelia, Mexico in October, 1987.

Proposals for new projects, to be considered by the Commission and submitted to the Executive Committee at Prague in September, 1986, are to investigate the teaching of the history of cartography, to research into the history of spatial information systems which are non-conventional in terms of modern cartography, and to develop a carto-chronology: chronological lists of information to help date the content of cartographic materials (ICA Newsletter). Preliminary registration forms for the meeting this year are available from the Hermon Dunlap Smith Center.



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# Calendar

## **22 March 1986**

Washington Map Society meeting to be held at the National Museum of American History at 1:30 p.m. Ray Norby, Senior Curator of the National Philatelic Collection, will present a slide-illustrated introduction to the map stamp collection donated by Allan Lee.

## **5 April 1986**

Mrs. S. Cider will speak about the history of portolan charts, with an opportunity to view manuscript portolan atlases from the sixteenth century. This New York Map Society meeting will be at 11:30 a.m. at The Hispanic Society, 613 W. 155th St., New York.

## **7 April 1986**

Andrew J. Cosentino of the Exhibits Office, Library of Congress, will speak about William Henry Holmes, topographic artist of the Wheeler and Hayden surveys, for the Washington Map Society, at the Cosmos Club, 8:15 p.m.

## **12 April 1986**

The Map Society of the Delaware Valley is planning a field trip to New Haven, Connecticut, where Dr. Barbara McCorkle will present a tour of the Yale Map Collection. For further information, call or write Chris Lane, 8405 Germantown Avenue, Philadelphia, PA 19118. (215) 242-4750.

## **30 April 1986**

'Charting the Pacific Basin 1768-1842,' an exhibition at the Library of Congress Geography and Map Division, will close.

## **3 May 1986**

A tour of the South St. Seaport Museum is offered to the New York Map Society by Norman Brauwer, Librarian, at 11:00 a.m.

## **6 May 1986**

'Mirror of the World,' an exhibit in the Map Gallery of the British Library, will close.

## **2 June to 30 August 1986**

'Tools of Empire,' an exhibition of maps, ship models and instruments, will be shown in the Donnelley Gallery at The Newberry Library.

## **4 June 1986 to 31 December 1987**

'The City in Maps: Urban Mapping to 1900' will be on exhibit in the Map Gallery of the British Library, London.

## **21 June 1986**

International Map Collectors Society Annual Symposium will be hosted by the Royal Geographical Society, London, from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. A special exhibition, prepared by the R.G.S., will be on display.

## **22 June 1986**

IMCoS Map Fair will be open to the general public from 10:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., at the Forum Hotel, Cromwell Road, London S.W.7. A panel will be available to identify and value, free of charge, material belonging to the general public.

## **11 to 14 September 1986**

Sixth International Coronelli Symposium to be held at the Rijksmuseum, Nederlands Scheepvaart Museum, Amsterdam.



# Recent Publications

*Atlas of North America—Space Age Portrait of a Continent* / Wilbur E. Garrett, ed. Washington D.C.: National Geographic Society, 1985. 250 p., 14 essays, ISBN 0-87044-605-3. (U.S. \$29.95, softbound or \$39.95 for hardbound with slip cover and magnifier. \$4.00 each for postage, from National Geographic Society, Dept. 100, Washington, D.C. 20036).

*This magnificent atlas offers quite extraordinary value. It contains about a hundred splendidly-reproduced images of North America seen from space, mostly using LANDSAT imagery. These striking views are supported by the National Geographic Society's usual impeccable maps, and by a generally lively commentary. This is a book to put with the other travel guides, and to consult whenever you need to visit an unknown region, or simply one to leaf over when you feel like reflecting on the patterns of geological structure and human habitation around us. On the whole, it offers more sustenance for geologists, meteorologists and ecologists than for historians, since that is the nature of this evidence. But for anybody interested in North America, it is required browsing.*

*A History of the Rectangular Survey System* / C. A. White. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of the Interior, Bureau of Land Management, 1983. 774p. Index. (\$25.00 from the Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 20402. Stock number 024-011-00150-6).

*This large volume is an excellent reference source for public land survey rules and policies, as well as the laws on which they were based. It begins with the political and economic events leading to the passage of the first Land Ordinance. Subsequent chapters cover the development of the Rectangular System of Surveys, the General Land Office, and the Offices of Surveyors General by state. The appendices alone are more than five hundred pages long, containing letters, general instructions to surveyors, specimen field notes, circulars, manuals, and plans.*

*U.S. Forty: Roadscape of the American Experience* / Thomas J. Schlereth. Indianapolis: Indiana Historical Society, 1985. 150p. ISBN 0-87195-001-4. (13.95 from Indiana Historical Society, 315 W. Ohio Street, Indianapolis, Indiana 46202).

*The author has used the Indiana stretch of U.S. 40 as a springboard for what amounts to a handbook for "the above-ground archaeology of the American highway." The famous transcontinental route has long been a favorite subject for both historians of American transportation systems and American cultural geographers. Schlereth's richly illustrated and highly readable entry does not add many new insights, but will be a useful introduction to related literature from many fields. A fine bibliographical essay closes the book.*



NOAA satellite thermal image of the southeastern United States



*Documents Cartographiques depuis la découverte de l'Amérique jusqu'à 1820: inventaire sommaire* / Pierre Lépine and Josée Berthelette. Montréal: Bibliothèque nationale du Québec, 1985. 383 p., 20 plates. ISBN 2-551-06545-3.

*This is essentially a list of the maps available in the Bibliothèque Nationale du Québec. They cover Canada quite thoroughly both in time and in space, and the list is unusual in that it includes both printed and manuscript original maps, as well as photographic reproductions. It is a rich source for the early history of Canada.*

*Essays on Walter Prescott Webb and the Teaching of History* / Dennis Reinhartz and Stephen E. Maizlish, eds. College Station: Published for the University of Texas at Arlington by Texas A & M University Press, 1985. ISBN 0-89096-234-0. (\$17.50 from Texas A & M Press, Drawer C, College Station, TX 77843).

*This slim volume of 101 pages presents the papers delivered in the nineteenth series of Walter Prescott Webb Memorial Lectures at the University of Texas at Arlington. In the first essay, "Walter Prescott Webb and the Fate of History," Jacques Barzun makes a thoughtful appraisal of Webb's contributions, and adds his own personal, provocative, and polished reflections on what is and is not history. Elliot West, in an essay entitled "Cowboys and Indians and Artists and Liars and Schoolmarms and Tom Mix: New Ways to Teach the American West," gives a delightfully readable bibliographic essay on various approaches to teaching the region so close to Webb's heart. Another essay, the introduction, and a post-script deal with Webb himself, as teacher and author. Finally, and perhaps most apposite to readers of Mapline, Dennis Reinhartz addresses "Teaching History with Maps: A Graphic Dimension." After the briefest of sketches of the history of cartography, he goes on to discuss the "message images" transmitted by maps and how teachers can use them in the classroom to invoke "mental images" in their students, promote graphicacy, and otherwise stimulate and enliven the learning of history; a bibliography of "Selected Cartographic Resources for Teaching History with Maps" is appended.*

*Greek and Roman Maps* / O.A.W. Dilke. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1985. 224 p., 62 illustrations, 7 appendices, index. ISBN 0-8014-1801-1. (U.S. \$25.00 from Cornell University Press, 124 Roberts Place, Ithaca, New York 14850).

*This is one of those books whose importance and interest are such that one wonders why they were not written long ago. Professor Dilke has spent many years making himself a master of the subject, and this treatment is long likely to remain the definitive one.*

*Mapping From Aerial Photographs* / C.D. Burnside. New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 1985. 384p. Bibliography. Index. ISBN 0-470-20230-0. (\$49.95 from John Wiley & Sons, Inc., One Wiley Drive, Somerset, New Jersey 08873).

*This book, a text book without planned exercises, explains the mathematical concepts used in the production of topographical maps from near-vertical aerial photography. Very little previous knowledge of the subject is assumed, and the first chapters cover the nature of the basic data of photogrammetry. The book continues on to the various ways topographic information can be abstracted to form a range of simple to more sophisticated types of maps.*

*Maps and Mapmakers of the Aegean* / Vasilis Sphyroeras, Anna Avramea, and Spyros Asdrahas. Athens: Olkos Editions, 1985. 263 p., map and general index. (Available from Olkos Editions, 5, Ipatia St., Athens, Greece).

*It is always instructive to leaf over a chronological sequence of maps of a single geographical region, and this is particularly the case for a region so neglected by historians of cartography as the Aegean. This handsome volume, with its well-reproduced maps, will be both interesting for the collector and useful for the historian.*

*Tooley's Dictionary of Mapmakers, Supplement* / R.V. Tooley. New York: Alan R. Liss, Inc, 1985. 116 p. ISBN 0-8451-1703-3. (U.S. \$39.50 from Alan R. Liss, Inc. 41 East 11th Street, New York, NY 10003).

*With this volume, R. V. Tooley adds about four thousand names to his Dictionary. The same criticisms as greeted the Dictionary could well greet this supplement; many names are still missing, and some are no doubt inaccurately cited or described or both (cf. for instance under "Chattillon"). Still, the original work has rendered great services for an initial orientation on many a cartographer, and soon we shall no doubt be reaching for its supplement to perform the same service.*

*The Walkers of Hanningfield: surveyors and mapmakers extraordinary* / A.C. Edwards and K. C. Newton. London: Buckland Publications, Ltd., 1985. 96 p. 39 plates. 9 tables. £35.

*This original and beautiful book is about the maps of the Walker dynasty: John the Architector, John the Younger and Samuel. They flourished about 1600, and produced marvellous images, in the shape of estate-plans, of various parts of Essex and adjacent counties in England. Some have already been reproduced in the publications of the Essex County Record Office, but we have here a complete set of them, out of which much social and economic history is waiting to be written.*